each son having the same claim as his brothers. The latter custom is reflected in the transmission of aristocratic Kurdish titles. All of the sons of a chieftain, irrespective of age or the rank of their mothers, receive the title of the father and enjoy an equal share in the property. Tribal chieftainship, as opposed to feudal overlordship, is usually settled on the eldest son, despite of the fact that the remaining brothers continue to enjoy the privileges of rank and share in the goods of the estate. Thus, if men have a plurality of sons and daughters in each generation and the original holding is unsupplemented by additional gains, it follows that an individual's inheritance grows progressively smaller with each death. Among the Muslim peasantry, where the amount of arable land is limited, as in certain areas in Egypt or in Syria, a single person's plot can soon diminish to a size insufficient to support a couple and the luckless legatee must seek employment elsewhere, usually as a tenant cultivator on some larger holding. The situation in Kurdistan is not quite as difficult, inasmuch as a person can always cut out a new field from the unclaimed lands of the state domain. In a situation in which the brothers or other relatives have quarrelled, property which by virtue of its size could guarantee an income for all can be reduced through inheritance into segments which are far from profitable. The practice in such cases, commonly handled by process of law, is to sell the property in question and to apportion each his share in money. It

428 [622] 423 428 [425]

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
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433 being self sufficient in his production, trading only that which is surplus to his requirements. Under the new conditions the local 249 production of cereals will be inadequate and the difference will have 178 to be made up by trading tobacco for wheat. Thus for the first time the ordinary commoner will be forced to evaluate his basic foodstuffs in terms of a cash economy - and this may have serious consequences. Under present conditions tobacco is so enormously valuable (in terms of cash) compared with any other Kurdish production that some well favoured villages may come to rely on this crop to the exclusion of all others, thus making the welfare of the community dependent upon fluctuations in the price of tobacco on the Baghdad market, - hardly a desirable development.

249 The social consequences of an increase in tobacco cultivation 427 may be equally drastic. Consider for instance the matter of rents. In a previous section I have suggested that the commoner normally pays 435 his Agha 50% of the yield of his land; and this is evidently no great hardship since the commoner family lives satisfactorily on the remaining 50%. Moreover in terms of cash the rental does not represent very much - at 1938 prices, a ton of wheat would purchase locally only just over 50 kilos of sugar. But under the new system not only will the commoner be unable to satisfy his own food requirements without resort to trade, but a 50% rental would, relatively speaking, be worth its weight in gold, - with the added exasperation that the commoner who trades tobacco will for the first time find himself under a direct tax obligation to the Government. There is little doubt that in such circumstances 'rents' would be reduced. In my view the general levelling up of financial status as between commoner and Agha which would result from this process would be entirely fatal to the existing tribal organisation.

249 On the analogy with the lowland areas the ultimate line of 622 evolution is indeed clear. The Agha finds it increasingly difficult to maintain his obligations of kinship and hospitality; he falls into debt and eventually by some trick of the law the tribal • 425 land is mortgaged to pay the bill; thereafter the new Agha is merely a landlord with no personal ties with the community - the process of tribal dissolution may to all intents and purposes be regarded as complete.

249 From the Government's point of view such a development is not 249 entirely undesirable. A completely detribalised community is in many 464 respects easier to administer than a tribal one, at least in the short term view. And there are still wider factors effecting the situation. The labour for the Kirkuk oil fields is largely supplied

* This is theoretically impossible, since by Iraq definition tribal land is miri land. Nevertheless the process of alienation has in the past clearly taken place in the plains and foothill areas.